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ABSTRACT

An approach to teaching English writing to Japanese high school students that focuses on writing for communication is described. First, communicative writing is defined. Next, a central concern of writing in Japan, the notion of audience, is discussed and two ways of categorizing audiences (real vs. imagined and "safe" vs. "dangerous") are examined. Specific writing activities to address each kind of audience are then outlined. Teachers are advised to have students address a specific audience in an imagined situation first, then for a real audience such as other students or publics. The exercises are built on a specified task such as introducing oneself to a stranger, gathering information, or writing signs. Cultural differences that affect the writer-audience relationship are considered briefly, and writing techniques for establishing a dynamic interchange with the audience are explored, including those that integrate skills (writing and reading, writing and speaking/listening), use revision by either peers or teacher, and actually sending the communication to the audience, by mail or electronic transfer. Information concerning an intercultural electronic mail connection is appended. Contains 33 references. (MSE)

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Teaching Communicative Writing

Suggestions for High School English Teachers in Japan

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Introduction

Why are Oral Communication subjects being given such special attention in Japan today? Now that oral communication skills are being emphasized so much, why are written communication skills not being similarly treated? Ever since the new Course of Study (1989) was put into effect in 1994, the courses, "Oral Communication A, B and C", have been in the spotlight whereas "Writing", another new subject, does not seem to have been paid very much attention to. However, written communication skills would seem to be as important as oral communication skills, especially since in Japan people rarely have any need to speak or listen in English but they may well need to write and read in English. In this sense, effective written communication in English can be said to have more urgency than effective oral communication in English for Japanese students. Moreover, learning about written communication can help Japanese students learn about oral communication. Indeed, in terms of social interaction, these two types of communication share certain basic elements of social intercourse such as the sense of audience and the influence of sociolinguistic forces. Thus, writing for communication, or "communicative writing", must be given more attention, at least as much attention as oral communication skills in Japanese high schools.

This paper discusses the idea of "communicative writing", focusing on two key elements:

(1) the notion of audience

(2) the dynamic interchange with the audience in writing

It also illustrates how these two fundamental concepts can be highlighted in the teaching of writing, so that real communicative writing in English classes in Japanese high schools can be implemented.

I. Current Situation of English Education in Japanese High Schools

"Useless", "waste of time", "grammar only": these words have been commonly used both inside and outside of the country to criticize English education in Japan. When it comes to the teaching of the communicative function of the language, these critical words do quite accurately describe what English education is like in this country. Historically speaking, as Maher (1984) explains, foreign language instruction in Japan has put the emphasis on reading and translation ever since Buddhism was introduced by the Chinese people over two thousand years ago and religion and literature were combined (p.46). LoCastro (1991) refers to this tradition inherited from the past and seen in today's foreign language teaching, saying, "One important objective of Japan's educational system . . . has been to gain knowledge from the West, which has meant training students to read and translate texts from other languages, especially English" (p.344).

One place where the evidence for the validity of these statements is clear is in the university entrance examination, which, without exception, asks syntactic questions to test knowledge of grammar rather than measuring fluency. Since in Japan "language study is seen as a convenient test of intelligence and not as training in communication" (Maher: 1984, p.47), "the typical Japanese university entrance examination does not test discourse processing skills . . . and thus . . . cannot be said to adequately measure language proficiency" (LoCastro: 1991, p.347). The backwash effect of this examination pattern influences the English curriculum of high schools all over Japan (Koike and Tanaka: 1995, p.18), and the "uselessness" of English in Japan seems to be defined largely in terms of the examination.

In this context, English writing in Japanese high schools has taken the form of translation and substitution. Writing has been commonly seen both by teachers and by students as synonymous with these two words. Little attention has been given to the social nature of writing, or, to writing for communication. In spite of the innovativeness of the new oral communication subjects, "writing" retains its ingrained and conventional image among both teachers and students. Since English teachers tend to think they have been teaching "writing" for years, most of them feel reluctant to look at what they have been actually doing for writing instruction, and they stick to their old ways. As a result, the objective of the new course, "Writing", which aims to "foster a positive attitude towards communicating

in English" (Japanese Ministry of Education: 1989, p.8) is not as widely recognized, and therefore not as widely examined, as the aims of the Oral Communication subjects.

In today's Japan, with high-tech information processing devices such as telecommunication networks and computers, writing in English is both possible and necessary in the real world, whether in business or in social life--quite as possible and necessary as speaking to native speakers of English. Therefore, more attention, at least as much attention as is given to oral communication skills, should be paid to writing for communicative purposes, or "communicative writing" in Japanese high schools.

II. Definition of "Communicative Writing"

"Communicative writing" can be defined as comprising two key characteristics: a clear notion of audience and a dynamic interchange with the audience in writing.

Let's think of a situation of "communicative writing" for the classroom. Students write in response to written and/or spoken discourse, such as, after reading Anne of Green Gables, writing a letter to the tourist office of Prince Edward Island in Canada to ask for more information about the places in the story. Students may actually send the letters, or they may merely exchange the letters in the classroom, writing replies to each other. Reading or listening to a message, analyzing it, asking questions, doing research, adding her/his own ideas, the writer sends back her/his own message to the original sender or shares her/his opinion with other people who also received the same message.

What, then, is the essence of this sort of "communicative writing" process? First, the writer has a clear vision of the reader, the "audience" of the written message. In other words, the writer visualizes the person or persons who will receive the message: who they are, and their attitudes, beliefs, occupations, educational backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, etc. Drawing on these kinds of information, the writer can craft her/his writing to transmit her/his message more effectively and clearly.

Second, in this sort of "communicative writing" process, the writer experiences real interaction with the readers. The written idea is shared with the readers, either with the real audience the writer has written for or with the teacher and/or classmates. Such real interchange by writing fosters a greater sense that writing is a social activity closely linked to the human life.

III. Notion of Audience

In Chapter II, the definition of "communicative writing" was outlined. Chapter III will discuss one of its basic elements, the notion of audience, which is essential for the teaching of communicative writing in Japan. In the Japanese classroom situation, where students are taught "translation" and "substitution" as English writing, the lack of the sense of audience among both teachers and students is typical. The importance of the sense of audience is described by Park (1982) when he writes, "The student who tries to write with no clear sense of the kind of things to be done, its social function, and the conventions appropriate to it flounders in a terrible vacuum" (p.256). In other words, the teacher must teach students to have a clear vision of the purpose, audience, and sociolinguistic aspects of writing.

What, then, is "audience" in writing? Unlike speaking, where a certain type of audience is usually available in front of the speaker, the act of writing itself is always solitary (Elbow: 1981, p.177; Kroll: 1984, p.180), no matter how much attention is paid in the process to its communicative purpose and the audience. This fact makes the relationship of "audience and communication" in writing quite complex and paradoxical. In this chapter, two ways of categorizing audience in writing are first introduced. Then, the teaching of the sense of audience is discussed. Finally, suggestions are given to Japanese English teachers for successfully teaching the sense of audience.

A. Two Ways of Categorizing Audience

1. "Real" versus "Imagined"

First, roughly speaking, audience can be categorized as "real" or "imagined". That is, in writing there is the real audience you can communicate with in a social interchange, and there is the audience in the head which you create in your imagination. Park (1982) describes these two types of audience, respectively, as "a given to be carefully observed and analyzed" and as "something unclear to be shaped or brought into clearer focus" (p.248).

The notion of audience as real, simply, refers to the real people the writer is writing for in the real world for certain communicative purposes such as to ask

questions, to reply, to argue, or just to say hello. Here "audience" means more than someone who will read the written text. The "real audience" implies the persons to whom the text is specifically directed. Kroll (1984) discusses this view of audience, calling it "the social perspective" (p.172). Kroll (1984) explains that writing is an act of human communication involving the thoughts and emotions of the audience (p.179).

When the writer writes for a real audience, however, especially when the writer does not have enough writing experience, s/he often faces a problem. A "decentering" (Kroll: 1984, p.179) process is essential for socially interactive writing, which requires the writer to gain a good insight into the characteristics of her/his audience. When the writer actually tries to communicate with a real audience, as suggested by Kroll (1984), s/he has to move away from her/his own self-centered perspective (p.179). Unfortunately it is not always easy for a writer to take into account what the reader with whom s/he is trying to communicate really feels about the subject because, as Kroll (1984) puts it, the writer tends to be "egocentric" in writing (p.179). This is especially true with beginning writers. Maimon (cited by Kroll, 1984) states that a problem with unexperienced writers is the "lack of consideration for what their readers know and do not know and for what they are and are not interested in" (p.179). The reason for this problem is explained by Kroll (1984), who claims that "the fact that writing is an unfamiliar medium of communication" causes the unskilled writer to pay more attention to the form of the composition than to visualizing the audience (p.182).

Even though writing is a social interchange where you are trying to communicate, the unpreventable absence of a visible audience is a distinctive and fatal characteristic of writing compared with face-to-face communication. Nevertheless, when writing is considered as an social act, interactions with other people are inevitably expected to take place in its process, just like other forms of communication.

The difficulty inherent in the interactive process with an real audience in writing, then, brings us to the notion of "imagined audience". That is, in writing, the writer is constantly ". . . defining, . . . constructing, representing, imagining, characterizing . . . audiences" (Park: 1982, p.248). The writer has to create the audience which s/he cannot actually observe physically when writing. As Elbow (1981) points out, unlike speaking, writers cannot see their readers in front of

them even when they are to write for a real audience. Therefore, as writers, we "are liable to use only our own frame of reference and ignore (the readers')" (Elbow, p.177). In other words, no matter how much the writer considers the characteristics of her/his audience and tries to adjust the writing to their interests, s/he cannot help but write from within her/his own imagination: the imagination belongs to and depends on the writer, so that different writers may have *different* perceptions of the *same* audience. Thus, writing is an act in a created world to an audience in the writer's head, realized in the written work itself. It is a world where the writer defines the characteristics, interests, and feelings of the people s/he is going to write for.

To make matters more complex, the two notions of audience, "real" and "imagined", are not completely separate, but overlap. That is, even when you think you are writing for a real audience, you "create" your own audience. This seemingly incompatible concept is described by Elbow (1981) as follows; ". . . no matter who the actual people are for whom we intend these particular words, we are usually influenced by people we carry around inside our heads" (p.186). This idea is extended by Park (1982) and Kroll (1984) when they insist that a created audience can be inferred from the written work (Park, p.249; Kroll, p.182). What is implied here is that the personal experience of social interaction the writer has had influences her/his visualization of the audience. Then, when s/he writes, no matter who s/he writes for, either for some real person or for a general audience, s/he has to evoke her/his past and write with a lot of imagination about the readers in order to hold in mind a clear vision of the audience, who they are, where they live, what they know, what they believe, etc.

2. "Safe" versus "Dangerous"

The distinction between a real or external audience and an internally created audience, however, is not the only perspective from which "audience" in writing can be viewed. That is, the second way of categorizing "audience" in writing is whether the audience is "safe" or "dangerous". Elbow (1981) writes, "Audiences . . . are the source of the attention we need if we are to be social animals at all, but they are also the source of danger" (p.185), and he categorizes "audience" in writing into two groups: "a safe audience" and "a dangerous audience". Elbow (1981) explains that a writer feels more comfortable in writing for

people who are eager to read her/his work, and therefore s/he performs her/his best (p.185). The "safe" audience is one that listens to and values the writer's work. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the "safe" readers are "easy" or "lazy" audiences who do not criticize or ask for a lot from the work. In other words, they can be "tough and demanding" (Elbow: 1981, p.185), and yet active and respectful readers.

In contrast, the "dangerous" audience is one that devalues the writer's words (Elbow: 1981, p.185). The writer feels nervous when writing for people who are going to trivialize her/his work, and thus s/he hesitates to express what s/he already has in mind (Elbow: 1981, p.185). For a writer, the dangerous audience is one which should be avoided if possible, and yet sometimes the writer must write for such an undesired audience. When a dangerous audience is unavoidable, Elbow (1981) suggests that the writer either change the audience to a safe one or simply try to pretend not to see it at the early writing stages (p.188).

B. Teaching the Notion of Audience

As described above, the notion of "audience" in the writing process is quite complicated. It is not surprising, then, that teachers frequently fail to give a clear and deep picture of a specific audience to their students. Park (1982) affirms that teachers "are too often unaware of the rich ambiguity of the term 'audience' and depend too heavily upon the concrete image of audience as the readers external to the text" (p.255). Teachers have failed to address or to explore sufficiently the complexities of the audience. Park (1984) states that

> most of the time we (teachers) want students to learn to write for a "general" audience. that is to say, we want them to write in relatively unstructured situations where little is given in the way of context and much remains to be invented by the writer. And this is where most teaching about audience becomes the most ineffective (p.256).

Indeed, the teacher often does not recognize that the "general" audience does not really exist in the classroom writing situation because the teacher is always there in the classroom in the position of reading the students' pieces of work. There exists a huge possibility of the "death" of real communicative writing when students write for the authority of the teacher who evaluates their work.

Since it is only the teacher who usually reads and responds to the students' written texts, regardless of whomever else they are writing for as the audience, the students tend to consider their teacher as the only audience in the classroom situation. Therefore, the teacher has to work to remind them of whatever other audience is intended instead of the teacher her/himself.

Because of this two-faced position of the teacher, the stance s/he should take in the teaching of writing is very ambiguous. At the same time, the vision students have of the teacher is also two-sided: as a judge or evaluator, and as a created audience who pretends to be a real reader who will give advice and feedback as that audience. This confusing situation faced by student writers is described by Elbow (1981). He explains that

> the student is writing *for* a teacher and *to* a general reader. But this general reader does not exist . . . He is not a particular person like the teacher who reads the words. And yet one of the main things about him is that he reads in a particular way in which no one else but teachers read . . . (p.222).

Berkenkotter (1981) reports that the authority of the teacher as evaluator makes the student's writing more topic bound and less audience-oriented because "to this authority, the student must demonstrate *her* authority on a given subject" (p.396). The teacher is a "dangerous" audience to her/his students, and simultaneously s/he is supposed to be the safe audience they are writing for. Elbow (1981) calls this paradox "the trickiest audience situation" (p.225). This incongruity of the teacher's roles is unavoidable in a classroom situation, where "the students are given the writing assignment by a teacher, who has the 'power of grade and disciplinary authority over him', and the students actually have nothing to say to the teacher" (Moffett, cited by Mansfield: 1993, p.71). Here both the students and the teacher wear disguises, the students pretending to write to someone who does not know about the subject being discussed and the teacher pretending not to know what her/his students write about (Elbow: 1981, p.221). In other words, both students and the teacher play an artificial "communication drama" (Mansfield: 1993, p.71).

Thus, there is neither a real audience nor real communication in the typical classroom writing instruction situation. The overall solution to this problem in the teaching of writing is to ensure that students write to a specific audience for certain real communicative purposes. Seeing an audience through "the social

perspective" can greatly influence and improve a student's writing process and, thus, her/his final product. When students write, unlike the situation in speaking, they usually do not see their audience in front of them, even when they are going to write for someone they know very well. Therefore, giving an unmistakable vision of the audience for their writing will help them focus on whom they are writing to and what they are writing for. Elbow (1981) points out that "if you want to give the best gift possible to a writer--and you can--give an audience" (p.180). A real audience with a real purpose to communicate for is a must in the teaching of communicative writing. This point is clearly stated by Johns (1993), referring to the ESL teaching context. Here are her words:

> . . . (I)f we are to educate our students for a breadth of communicative demands they will confront in English language contexts, we, and they, must understand the necessity of considering an audience as real--living a community that participates in sharing values and interests. At every educational level, we must provide tasks for our students in which these real audiences can be researched and real tasks and communities can be addressed (p.87).

C. Suggestions for Japanese Teachers

Who can be an audience when it comes to an English writing class at a high school in Japan, where the language is taught as a foreign language and students do not feel any pressure or need to write in English in their daily life?

1. Writing for a Specified Audience in Imaginary Situations

The first solution to this problem is to give students an imaginary situation where students write for specific audiences, but where the audiences will not actually read nor reply to their written texts. It is important that the teacher specify the setting in detail and describe the audience clearly so that her/his students can fully visualize the context.

Here are some examples of writing activities in imaginary situations.

(1) Students write a paragraph of self-introduction to a young beautiful lady from Los Angeles who will visit the school the next week.

(2) Imagining that they are going to stay with an American family in Omaha, Nebraska, for two weeks in the summer, students write a letter one month

before leaving Japan to tell the family about themselves.

(3) For exchange students from Australia visiting the school for three months, students write a guide map of their own city.

(4) After reading a story and learning some songs of the Beetles, students write a letter to one of the four members and ask any questions they want to ask.

(5) After reading his biography, students write letters to Thomas Edison asking for another invention.

(6) After watching a video of the CNN news program reporting the divorce of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, students write an encouraging letter to the Princess. They may also ask her what it was like to live in the Buckingham Palace.

(7) Students write to an astronaut of the space shuttle and ask what it is like to be out in the space.

The key idea is for the audience to be clearly defined and for the task to be creative. Writing in an imaginary situation can give rise to imaginativeness in students' writing. Having a specific audience in mind will help make students gain a clear sense of audience. The definition of audience and purpose is not clear enough when the teacher just says, "Write to an American lady" or "Say something to Edison".

One possible limitation of this kind of practice in an imaginary situation is that, since students cannot expect any reactions or replies from the real audiences, these activities tend to be a one-time and one-way practice without any real feedback from the real audiences except for the possible reply given by the classmates and/or the teacher pretending to be Thomas Edison or Princess Diana.

If this approach is to be successful in Japan the teacher must bear in mind the "danger" s/he, as a teacher, represents to her/his students, and that this power can strongly affect the written texts by the students. S/he must establish the imaginary situation clearly in her/his students' minds, and then s/he must respond as if s/he were that audience in that setting, not as a critical teacher. Writing to Michael Jordan after a reading about basketball can be fun, but only if the teacher reads from Jordan's perspective.

2. Writing for Real Audiences

Besides establishing an imaginary situation with specific audiences, the Japanese English teacher can look for actual "real" audiences who may possibly respond to her/his students' writing. Finding a real audience in a Japanese classroom situation is tough and yet quite possible. One possibility is someone in an English-speaking country whom students are interested in writing to and from whom replies can be expected. In schools which are lucky enough to have sister schools in English-speaking countries, students can send letters to the students there. Here are other possible sources abroad for real audiences:

(1) After learning about the form of English letters, students write to L.L. Bean to ask for a mail-order catalog, asking for necessary information about ordering from Japan.

(2) When reading about Aborigines in Australia, students write to the tourist office of the country, asking where the heritage of the tribes can still be seen.

(3) After reading about the Rocky Mountains, students can be encouraged to write to the U.S. Department of Interior to ask for brochures for the national parks in the mountain area.

(4) Students pick out an American university and ask about the requirements for entering the university and about tuition.

(5) Having studied the history of London, students write to the tourist office of the city and ask about historical sites in the city. They may also ask for a list of accommodations and the city map so that they can make their own imaginary travel plans.

(6) The ALT (assistant English teacher) working for the school may know someone teaching at a high school in her/his native country. The ALT and the teacher make a contact with that person, and set up an arrangement for exchanging letters. Students write to the students of that school, introducing their own school, and asking about the school life there.

(7) Because the ALT is replaced every two years, students may make a video for incoming ALT's introducing their school, narrated in English. Students write the script for the video. The tape can also be used when the school has a guest from an English-speaking country. It also can be sent to the sister school, if the school has one.

Moreover, real audiences can be found even within Japan. In many high schools, at least one ALT is available. Students can communicate in writing with the ALT by exchanging letters or journals. Outside of the school building, the increase in the numbers of foreign people in Japan, especially in city areas, will help students find someone they can write for in English. Here are examples of real audiences available inside Japan:

(1) Students write letters to ALT's in other schools in their city, asking about Japanese customs surprising to them.

(2) The teacher asks for information about exchange students studying at a nearby university. Students write to them and ask about the differences between their school life in their countries and in Japan.

(3) The teacher asks for information about English-speaking people living in the city at the municipal international exchange office at city hall. Students write to these residents and ask about inconveniences they have experienced while living in the city. When their questions are replied to, students may write back some advice and suggestions.

(4) Students think of any possible public places where English signs would be needed for English speaking people living in or visiting the city, in such places as train stations, buses or banks. Students write the appropriate English signs for each place. If possible, those signs might be actually placed in the stations and in buses.

(5) Students plan to do a survey of English speakers living in the city about how comfortable/uncomfortable the city is, and they write a questionnaire. After the survey is actually done by students, they report the result to the class.

Though it might require a great deal of effort by the teacher, for the students having a real audience is surely even more effective than writing to a specified imaginary audience, no matter how well-defined it may be. The greatest advantage is that students can expect real replies to what they have written, reactions not from the teacher but from their real audience. When they are addressing a real audience, it is easier for them to learn to analyze the audience. Students will thus learn to include specific information especially for the audience to whom they are writing.

3. Cultural Differences in Writer-Audience Relationship

When Japanese students write for an English-speaking audience, it is very important for the teacher to point out that problems may arise because of the culturally different views of the writer-audience relationship. In terms of written communication, there exists a deep cultural difference between Japanese and English-speaking writers as to the respective roles of the writer and the reader. Hinds (1987) explains the different patterns of the roles of the writer and the reader in written communication in English and in Japanese. He explains that "English speakers, by and large, charge the writer, or the speaker, with responsibility to make clear and well-organized statements" (p.143). On the other hand, he describes Japanese as a reader-responsible language, reporting that Japanese readers usually "intuit" what the writer means when they read (Hinds: 1987, p.144). In other words, the expectations an English-speaking reader has when s/he reads are quite different from those of a Japanese reader.

What may take place in an English writing class in Japan is that the student writer brings the perspective of "a Japanese writer writing for Japanese readers", and leaves the responsibility of clear communication to the audience, expecting that the audience will *try* to understand what s/he means in her/his writing. This reader-reliant attitude of the writer, which is quite natural in the Japanese context, can cause misunderstanding, mistrust, and miscommunication in the interaction with English-speaking audiences. Therefore, the teacher must remind students of the importance of the responsibility, as writers of English, for describing, explaining, and clarifying. The fact that "effective written communication in English is the sole provenience of the writer" (Hinds: 1987, p.152) must be realized both by the teacher and by students.

Ⅳ. Dynamic Interchange with Audience in Writing

As seen in Chapter Ⅲ, writing for a real audience is strongly recommended in order to make the English writing class more communication-oriented in Japanese high schools. However, "communicative writing" also implies interchange with the audience; otherwise "communication" does not take place.

The sense of dynamic interchange with the audience can be generated in the writing process in three ways: through activities integrating writing and other language skills, through revising processes with the teacher and classmates, and through sending final products to real audiences. Even in the Japanese EFL context, activities in these three areas seem to be quite possible.

A. Integration of Skills as a Means of Interchange with Audience

In spite of the fact that the act of writing is solitary, the teacher of writing should not be focused just on the surface mechanism of writing. For students to acquire communicative writing skills, the teaching of writing will benefit from being integrated with other language skills such as reading, speaking and listening skills because, as Raimes (1983) asserts, conversations with other people and reading written materials are necessarily involved at any stage of writing in a real life situation (p.12). In other words, when you write, you may read something to gather ideas before you write, ask your friends if your idea is clear while writing, and read what you have written by yourself. The integration of skills involved in real-life writing can be, and should be, incorporated in school writing.

1. Writing and Reading

First, the close link between writing and reading can be highlighted to make students realize the perspective readers have. The cognitively close connection between these two skills has, of course, been well-established by many researchers. Stotsky (cited by Eisterhold, 1990) summarizes three key research findings which demonstrate the tie between these two skills; (1) correlations between reading achievement and writing ability, (2) correlations between writing quality and reading experience, and (3) correlations between reading ability and measures of

syntactic complexity in writing (p.88). Reid (1993) explains that "writing and reading are cognitively similar: both writer and reader *construct* meaning from text and *interpret* meaning from text" (p.64). Zamel (1992) argues that reading provides "so-called comprehensible input which, if acquired, will later be displayed in the writing produced"; that is, it provides "ideas that can be used as a basis for writing one's own text" (p.468). Therefore, "writing . . . gives these (beginning) learners insights into the goals, constraints, and concerns of authors, insights which they apply to their reading" (p.469). Eisterhold (1990) illustrates a general assumption that readings can serve as basic models for acquiring writing skills (p.88).

What is implied in these studies on the writing-reading connection is that writing and reading are interdependent and that good writers tend to be good readers and vice versa. When the reader reads, s/he, as audience, explores the text with the experience and knowledge s/he already has in order to identify the writer's stance, to discover the meaning of the text, and to communicate with the writer whom s/he has found in the text: the writer created in the head of the reader. The reader, then, reads through the eyes of the writer. As is claimed by Zamel (1992), "by reading like a writer writes, students come to see that to understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue, . . . and that understanding means not so much taking away from a text as giving to the text what is not there" (p.471). The reader exchanges words, ideas and feelings with the writer, trying to communicate back and forth.

Let's analyze this dialogue from the viewpoint of the writer. When the writer writes, s/he tries to respond to her/his intended audience, as visualized in her/his own head, by drawing on her/his experience and knowledge. In the writing process, s/he reads what s/he has written from the perspective of the audience in the head, and s/he receives certain messages from the invisible audience. The imaginary reader within the writer speaks back to the writer. In this sense, the writer is also always the audience of the reader: the one who tries to hear what the reader wants to read.

This complicated link between writing and reading, and more particularly, between writer and audience, can help build the writer's sense of communication among Japanese high school students. That is, the active use of reading in writing classes will help make English classes in Japanese high schools more communicative.

For example, according to The Course of Study (1989), responding to spoken or written discourse by writing an outline and/or the main points and organizing one's idea about the content is demanded in the writing activities in Japanese high school English classes. In this context, the five activities of writing-reading integration, discussed by Zamel (1992, p.472-480), seem to be quite possible in a Japanese high school classroom. Here are her five activities:

(1) Journal-writing: Students write in journals their responses to the text and share the ideas. Students will be provided with new ways of understanding, which may lead them back to the text.

(2) Written response to discipline-specific texts: Students write about what they have found interesting/significant/moving/puzzling in the texts of other subjects. Though Zamel discusses this activity for an ESL class, in Japan's EFL context, teachers may adapt it by supplying English sub-texts related to what the students are learning in other subject classes.

(3) Double-entry note book: Students put a copied text on one side of the notebook and write reactions on the other side. Students may respond to a certain idea or may summarize or retell the text. Through the conversation with the text (the author), the students' reading and writing will become more lively.

(4) Writing in the pre-writing stage: Writing about their personal experiences and ideas related to the topic prior to reading the text will make students explore the topic, and they will be more involved in reading. Students read as writers.

(5) Writing in sequence about readings: Students are given writing assignments before, during, and after the reading to provide them with chances to write from different viewpoints about the same topic.

Through such activities, the student writer is asked to view the text both as a writer and as a reader, and s/he learns to read as the writer writes and to write as the reader reads.

2. Writing and Speaking/Listening

It is, however, not just reading that correlates with the dynamic interchange with the audience implied by truly communicative writing. Speaking and listening

skills also parallel writing skills in many ways. It is desirable to combine writing activities with oral-aural skills to make the language teaching context more like reality by allowing for all forms of interaction with an audience. Raimes (1983) suggests that in a language class, to keep it as close as possible to the real-life situation, "students should . . . speak (not just repeat) . . . then, . . . students will also listen to each other . . . the listener can react by writing down for a reader his version of the information he just heard" (p.68).

Like the integrative activities of writing and reading, speaking and listening skills help foster the sense of interchange in the writing process. The interaction of writing and oral-aural skills is quite possible and can contribute significantly to improving students' writing. Moreover, writing in response to spoken discourse is expressly demanded in The Course of Study (1989). How, then, can writing be integrated with speaking and listening skills? Raimes (1983) suggests seven activities through which students can practice their oral-aural skills along with writing (p.69-80). Here are the seven activities:

(1) Brainstorming
(2) Guided discussion
(3) Interviews
(4) Skits
(5) Dictations
(6) Note-taking
(7) Story-telling

Another activity for integrating writing with oral-aural skills is freewriting. According to Elbow (1981), the process of freewriting is very close to the process of speaking. Here are his words:

> Freewriting teaches you to write without thinking about writing. We can usually speak without thinking about speech--without thinking about how to form words in the mouth and pronounce them and the rules of syntax we unconsciously obey--and as a result we can give undivided attention to what we say. Not so writing . . . Freewriting helps you learn to *just say* it. Regular freewriting helps make the writing process *transparent* (p.15).

In the Japanese context where form is traditionally regarded essential in language learning, many English teachers are looking for activities to get away from grammar-oriented methods. Freewriting can be an effective way to have students

focus on content rather than form in writing. Moreover, for Japanese students, who usually hesitate to express themselves both in speech and writing until they feel they are free from any grammatical mistakes, freewriting will be a welcome and liberating avenue both for writing and speaking.

B. Revision as a Means of Interchange with Audience

Revising is, of course, an inherent part of the writing process. It offers real possibilities for generating a sense of audience and of social interaction with the audience. Both peer-revision and teacher-revision can build up the sense of writing as interchange with the audience.

1. Peer-Revision

Peer-revision will help establish writing as communicative. In the revising stage, sharing drafts with each other and exchanging ideas and questions can help students rewrite the texts. Zamel (1983) points out the importance of "collaborative activities in which students comment and raise questions about each other's writing" (p.6). Kroll (1984) claims that writers must be cooperative and interactive in the writing class to "experience the social dimensions of writing" (p.180). Sharing written text with other students, according to Zamel (1982), "helps develop in students the crucial ability of re-viewing their writing with the eyes of another" (p.206), and it "becomes the basis for the next construction of the paper (Zamel: 1983, p.7). Keh (1990, p.296) agrees on the advantages of peer-feedback, illustrating three advantages:

(1) feedback at the learner's own level

(2) greater sense of audience with readers other than the teacher

(3) learning more about writing through critical reading of others' paper

Having students revise each other's draft makes the writing class more active, interactive and communicative.

The simplest form of collaborative activities for peer-revision may be to share the written texts with classmates at any stage of the writing process. By sharing drafts with classmates, students can have their writing actually read by real people, which is impossible when they write for an imagined audience. This experience fosters a clearer sense of audience in school writing, where students

can easily lose sight of the intended audience, whether the audience is real or imagined. Sharing drafts also provides students actual opportunities to communicate with each other. The students may advise each other either orally or in writing.

Even in the monolingual classroom in Japan, though a few adaptations will have to be made, peer-revision is quite possible. Since one of the purposes for this activity is to have students communicate with each other in the target language, English, clear directions must be provided by the teacher. For example, when oral skills are not developed enough to have oral discussion, written communication with the help of a question sheet and/or a certain form to check the content, prepared by the teacher, will be effective and efficient. Partial use of the native language may be permitted, too. The ALT will be of great help when monitoring the class. When the students' language ability is not developed enough for the task, they will be thrown into the sea of confusion if they are told to do peer-revision unless the teacher is careful in organizing pairs and groups and in directing the groups.

2. Teacher-Revision

Teacher-revision, too, can establish writing as communicative. In this regard, the teacher's approach to revising is very important for making the revising process more interactive and for cultivating the student's sense of interchange in writing. Oral or written response to the draft from the teacher can be a beneficial means of improving the student's sense of communication and the audience awareness, and therefore, the final product. That is, there is a great potential for the students to exchange ideas through the revision process with the teacher. However, what usually happens in teacher-revision is, as Charles (1990) points out, "the teacher/editor takes students' drafts away and provides a written comment on them. Under these circumstances a dialogue over the text is not possible, since the writer has no opportunity to contribute to the discussion" (p.287).

In a Japanese classroom, where a teacher usually teaches over 40 students at different levels, it seems almost impossible for her/him to have conferences with each student because of the large numbers and the busy school schedule. A compromise to replace the individual conference is the "whole class" conference, whereby the teacher raises questions such as

"Who are you writing for?"

"Did you think of what your audience may already know about your topic?"

"Did you think of what your audience may not know about your topic?"

"Did you imagine what your audience wants to know about your topic?"

"Do you think your audience is given enough information about your topic?"

Two further solutions for this problem are suggested by Charles and by Hyland. Charles (1990) offers a unique "self-monitoring" (p.292) technique in students' composition. In self-monitoring, students mark the parts in their written texts where they feel improvement is needed with underlines and annotations. The teacher, then, responds to the comments in her/his revising. Charles (1990) sees three advantages in this technique:

(1) There are real dialogues between the teacher and students.

(2) Students can easily ask about unclear points, either at the surface level or in the content, and they can get direct answers.

(3) Students are encouraged to take a critical and analytical look at their own writing, which leads them to the readers' viewpoint.

Hyland (1990) proposes another teacher-revising technique called "recorded commentary"(p.282). In this activity the teacher tape-records comments, responding to written questions which the students include when they hand in their written texts. Hyland (1990) reports that this method is very effective since "a recording is more personal and informative than written comments" (p.284). Obviously, here is a conversation with a real purpose. If this method is tried in Japan, the active use of the ALT is, again, strongly encouraged since it will provide students more chances to listen to English by a native speaker who speaks personally to each student.

One limitation shared by these two latter methods, when the Japanese context is taken into account, is that sometimes students' expressive skills are not developed enough for them to put down what they want to know on the paper. The teacher probably needs to teach some basic ways to formulate their questions. Another possible problem is that, though these activities might appear to be good for reading and listening, in reality, it may turn out that students cannot understand the teacher's reply either written or spoken. Since it is essential that the students understand the teacher's response, the teacher must make her/his advice as clear to each student as possible. Until students get used to the

activities, partial use of the first language may be allowed.

However, it is important to remember that there is a very serious potential problem with teacher-revision in the writing process: the authority of the teacher in the classroom must be considered carefully, as described in Chapter III. When the teacher responds to the students' drafts in revising, both the teacher and the students must keep in mind the role of "a double audience" (Mansfield: 1993, p.72) which the teacher always plays. Thus, the kinds of the teacher's reactions in teacher-revision are very important for encouraging students to devote themselves more to communicative writing. In revising, the teacher should adopt the "eye" of the specific reader the writer had in her/his head based on the assignment. Then, the teacher must respond as the target reader would. Elbow (1981) describes the uselessness of the teacher responding from a general viewpoint when s/he does not say "how successful (the student's writing) is at achieving a certain effect on a certain audience" (p.226). This "certain audience" is what the teacher must pretend to be, and the "certain effect" is what s/he must feed back to her/his student writers from the viewpoint of that "certain audience".

Another possible way to make teacher-revision more successful is to make teacher-revision optional. That is, the teacher should first encourage students to share their texts with friends. As Elbow (1981) suggests, students feel more sense of safety from friends than from the teacher (p.228). In this case, however, the teacher must make clear to the students what revising is and what they are supposed to do in revising, and must emphasize that the teacher is always available to help them if any advice and suggestions are needed. The optional teacher-revision will gradually make the students less hesitant to share their written texts with the teacher.

Overall, despite some difficulties mentioned above, teacher-revision is a very effective process for helping the students realize the nature of social interchange through writing. As Raimes (1985) notes, relatively speaking, unskilled writers need "more time; more opportunity to talk, listen, read, and write . . . more instruction and practice in generating and organizing ideas; more attention to rhetorical options available to them . . ." (p.250). English teachers in Japan tend to rush hastily from one activity to another, changing from one topic to another, without stopping for "communication" through writing. Teacher-revision can teach the notion of interchange, but it takes care and time. Spending days and weeks on

one task with cyclical and varied interactive revision with the students is a very unusual way to teach in Japan; however, it is essential if the aim is to improve the students' communicative writing skills.

C. Sending Out the Final Product as a Means of Interchange with Audience

Finally, communicative activities which actually use the final product should be strongly encouraged to let students experience "real" communication through writing. The activities, of course, vary according to the purposes, the audiences, and the means of sending written texts. The simplest way is to send by mail the final product to real audiences, preferably audiences that could possibly write back, as described in Chapter III. The teacher needs to remind the students to ask for a reply from the receiver because feedback from a real audience fosters positive attitudes toward writing in English and invites students to write more for that audience and/or another audience. When the students write for someone in the community (the ALT, for example), it is possible to hand-deliver the written material directly.

Another idea for sending the written message is to use e-mail. The use of computers in English classes in Japan is still limited due to the shortage of computers, large class sizes, the lack of the knowledge about operating computers among teachers, and the fear teachers commonly have that the expensive machines might get broken. Although today there are few Japanese high schools which are equipped with 40 computers with access to the Internet, the number will surely increase in next 10 years. The use of e-mail in a writing class is to be encouraged because of, according to Warschauer (1995, p.8), five advantages it holds over other means of communication:

(1) high speed transmission
(2) capability of transmitting large amounts of information at one time
(3) easy data management
(4) possible transmission to multiple receivers
(5) low cost

By using e-mail to write to students in a high school in the United States, for example, Japanese high school students can easily interact with the real audience they write for. Through exchanging messages, they experience real social

interchange. Warschauer (1995) claims that in the United States "the most popular way of using e-mail for ESL teaching is for cross-cultural exchange" (p.47), and he offers lists of the resources (See Appendix). Thus, it may not be very difficult for a Japanese teacher to find partners for her/his students to have a discussion with. Warschauer (1995) reports a case where ESL students in the United States were provided with writing practice by communicating with English-speaking U.S. students by e-mail (p.49).

This new technique of social interaction through the new technology, however, has some limitations. Warschauer (1995, p.49) notes two major problems:

(1) It is not rare that the partners do not respond to the message, which may make students discouraged.

(2) Many students gradually lose interest and the communication becomes aimless.

He also suggests possible solutions such as getting the students to have multiple partners, having partners in different places, and giving students assignments related to other subject studies (p.49).

Of course, another limitation is that both teachers and students need training with the keyboard and the operation of computers. Above all, nothing starts unless the school is equipped with computers connected to the Internet.

Conclusion

When Japanese high school students are taught English as a foreign language, teachers must ask these questions: "What will the students do with English? What can they do with the foreign language?" Since foreign language teaching in Japan has sometimes tended to be far removed from the real use of the language and to fall into the category of "brain training", one of the roles of the forward-looking foreign language teacher today is to make the class as close as possible to real-life situations. Considering the rapid development of communication devices and the geographic isolation of Japan from English-speaking countries, it is evident that written communication skills are much more realistic needs for people in Japan than are oral communication skills. In the proper classroom situation, written communication can provide students with a wide variety of real audiences, and can therefore generate a greater sense of social interaction in the real English-speaking world. Indeed, it is usually easier to find a real audience for written communication in Japan's EFL context than to find one for oral communication. What is more, the inherent solitude of the act of writing can be an advantage for Japanese students, who are said to be very shy about having a face-to-face conversation with strangers. They may feel less anxious in written communication than in oral communication.

Though it is not easy for a teacher in Japan to secure a variety of real audiences for her/his students, it is a rewarding challenge for a language teacher to work to enable students to experience real language use. Teaching communicative writing is an effective and helpful way of providing the students with a clear sense of audience, with the idea of interaction with the audience, and therefore, with access to the genuine world of the English language.

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Appendix: Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections (IECC)

Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections
Intercultural E-Mail Classroom Connections (IECC) is a great resource for finding classroom partners, looking over announcements of projects, or discussing general issues related to uses of intercultural e-mail. IECC is made up of four separate lists: *IECC:* for teachers seeking partner classrooms. To subscribe, send the message *subscribe* to *IECC-request@stolaf.edu* *IECC-PROJECTS:* for announcement of specific projects. To subscribe, send the message *subscribe* to *IECC-PROJECTS-REQUEST@stolaf.edu* *IECC-DISCUSSION:* for general discussion about the intercultural e-mail classroom. To subscribe, send the message *subscribe* to *IECC-discussion-request@stolaf.edu* *IECC-HE:* for making announcements and discussing projects at the higher education level. To subscribe, send the message *subscribe* to *IECC-he-request@stolaf.edu*

from Warschauer, E-mail for English Teaching. p.48.

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